

Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security

2107 Department of Justice, Washington 25, D. C.

February 19, 1952

***DOJ Declassification/Release
Decision on File***

General Walter B. Smith
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C.

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Dear General Smith:

This is in reference to the President's letter of September 25, 1951, to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, advising that he had directed the National Security Council through its Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security to provide advice and assistance to the Departments and Agencies in connection with Executive Order 10290.

Pursuant to instructions, the ICIS has established a Subcommittee concerned exclusively with Executive Order 10290. The attached sheet gives a digest of the Terms of Reference of this Subcommittee, its membership, and the name and address of the Executive Secretary. The Subcommittee, at its first meeting on January 18 directed the Executive Secretary to canvass the Departments and Agencies to determine the status of the various activities required in carrying out the Executive Order.

Recognizing the problems of certain Departments and agencies, the Subcommittee will arrange for assistance in connection with the preparation of agency regulations under Executive Order 10290. Accordingly, the Security representatives of the Department of State, the Department of Defense and the Atomic Energy Commission have indicated that those agencies would make staff members available for consultation with the representatives of any Departments or agencies desiring assistance. Requests for such assistance may be made directly with the Security representatives of the State, Defense and AEC, or through the Executive Secretary of the Subcommittee.

The Subcommittee is hereby requesting from each Executive Department or Agency receiving the President's letter a report of the status of the work of bringing the agency procedures into accord with the Executive Order. If new or revised regulations are being prepared we would like to be advised as to when the drafts might be ready for review for conformance with E.O. 10290. We are also interested in the status of your plans or programs for training and inspection as required by the Order.

Attention is called to those provisions of the Executive Order and the references in the President's letter which emphasize that security classifications set forth in the Order apply only to information the safeguarding of which is necessary in the interest of national security. While many agencies may have little or no occasion to so classify documents, the fact that work contributing directly to the national defense is now so widely spread throughout the structure of the government makes it necessary that any agency which may handle classified material be prepared to carry out effectively the terms of the Executive Order.

The effectiveness of the safeguards for security information as defined in the Order is impaired by the assignment of security classifications to information which should not be so classified. It is therefore of great importance that the delegations of authority to classify security information be specific and clearly defined. In those agencies which originate and handle little or no classified security information, the problem posed by Executive Order 10290 should be considerably simplified by a very limited delegation of the authority to classify, or, as has been done in at least one agency, limiting the authority to classify security information to the head of the agency.

Both the Executive Order and the President's letter emphasize the importance of the proper delegation of authority and assignments of responsibility in connection with the security regulations. The Subcommittee considers this a matter of the utmost importance in the control of information involving the national security. We would like to be advised at the earliest practicable date of the name of the official or officials having department or agency-wide responsibility for the administration of Executive Order 10290. This does not refer to the security or public information representatives serving in a staff capacity or directing specific phases of the program, but to the senior executives having overall responsibility, either for the entire agency or for a major subordinate element thereof.

In addition, in order to insure proper handling of matters which may affect your agency, we should like to be advised immediately of the member of your staff to whose attention communications dealing with this Executive Order should be addressed.

It is requested that a status report or copies of draft regulations, if they are ready, be forwarded to the Executive Secretary, Subcommittee on Executive Order 10290, Room 1318, Department of Justice Building, at your earliest convenience.

For the Subcommittee,


Edward R. Trapnell
Executive Secretary

ICIS Subcommittee on Executive Order 10290

ICIS SUBCOMMITTEE ON EXECUTIVE ORDER 10290

Background

E.O. 10290, dated September 24, 1951, prescribed Regulations Establishing Minimum Standards for the Classification, Transmission, and Handling by Departments and Agencies of the Executive Branch, of Official Information Which Requires Safeguarding in the Interest of the Security of the United States.

Pursuant to instructions of the President to the National Security Council, as indicated in the President's letter of September 25 to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, the NSC Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security created a special Subcommittee on E.O. 10290 to "furnish advice and assistance to the Departments and Agencies in connection with these regulations and to maintain continuing review of the classification activities in every department or agency to insure uniform and proper application of these regulations, including declassification whenever possible." Terms of Reference for the Subcommittee were approved by the ICIS on November 1, 1951.

Digest of Terms of Reference

The ICIS Subcommittee on E.O. 10290 is composed of one public information and one security representative of the Departments of State, Treasury, Defense and Justice, with a full-time Executive Secretary. Representatives of other agencies will participate as required in handling matters affecting other agencies.

The Subcommittee is to furnish advice and assistance to Executive Departments and Agencies and maintain continuing review of activities in each agency to insure proper application of the Executive Order.

The Subcommittee will review and advise as to adequacy and conformance with E.O. 10290 the internal regulations adopted by Departments and Agencies to implement the Executive Order; maintain lists of individuals in each Department and Agency having responsibility for administration of such regulations, and require each department or agency to report periodically on administration of the Executive Order.

The Subcommittee is to insure that each department or agency establishes an inspectional system, an educational program and effective procedures for carrying out the purposes of the Order.

The Subcommittee will also recommend to ICIS any additional measures considered necessary to effective administration of the order, including suggestions from non-government sources.

Executive Secretary: Edward R. Trapnell
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Code 197 (RE 8200), Ext. 223